



MULTICULTURAL STUDENT SERVICES CENTER

Carol Mitten, Chairman Zoning Commission

441 4th Street NW, Suite 200 South

Washington DC 2000

Re: GWU/School Without Walls Case # 06-17

Dear Carol Mitten,

Please accept this letter in support of the GWU/SWW project. I represent GW as an employee, and through my office, the Multi Cultural Student Services Center. Our role within the university is to help create a climate on campus that demonstrates a commitment to diversity, inclusion, and the kind of community relationships that support the mission of the university. While we are small in size, we contribute to campus life in a manner that touches undergraduate students, graduate students, faculty and staff. In the process of being a community builder on campus, we reach out to D.C. public schools and support their visitation to campus, and we host multi cultural student groups from around the country in support of our Admissions Office and their recruitment efforts. We are located directly across G Street Northwest, from the School Without Walls and have partnered with the school and with former Principal Sheila Harris, to provide classroom space, meeting space, and access to some of our technology.

The relationship we have with students at SWW is very similar to the relationship we have with our undergraduate and graduate students. We approach their growth and development in the same manner, when they visit our office, when we visit their school, or even when we greet them on the streets. SWW students are an integral part of university life at GW; we walk, talk, and dine with these young people every day. The reason why I mention this aspect of our engagement with SWW youth is to highlight a number of intrinsic benefits that the SWW students will enjoy, for a life time. I am aware of the politics, and of the issues that will circulate around this project for the next few years, and frankly speaking, I am surprised that anyone would hesitate on moving it forward. There are a number of reasons why this project must be supported, and each one of those reasons has a future in this city and in the world of work, to consider.

The strengthened relationship with GW will impact SWW students because of an enhanced level of interaction with university level administrators, students and faculty, including: the overall quality of the education and experience will improve; the increased sense of expectation for future college and career prospects will improve; the college bound rate will

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improve; the aggregate grade point and standardized scoring average will improve. The prospects for SSW student enrollment at GW through the HiSCIP Program, an opportunity to enroll at one of DC's private universities for free, will improve. In communities across the nation, where universities engage private secondary education institutions, these same areas of growth are immediate and dramatic. Although we are on new ground with this public private partnership, there is every expectation that the same results will occur.

This partnership may set a trend for other private public partnerships in this city, the Nation's Capital, where the quality of public education is failing young people at every level. Although I am not running for office, if I were, my next five phone calls would be directed to the administration at Georgetown, Catholic, American, Gallaudet, and Trinity University.

You, we, have an incredible opportunity to consider. This project will benefit the youth of this city and it will provide incredible benefit to the following:

The Local Community, with its beauty, access to educational resources, meeting space, and community engagement with students.

The University, with expanded housing, the responsibility for guardianship, a learning laboratory to apply the latest in instructional technology, and the opportunity to become a national leader in public private partnerships.

The City, will improve its national reputation in public school education, the city/landscape will be enhanced dramatically, the historic building will be renovated and serve as a long standing beacon of excellence.

Thank you for your work on this initiative, as a native Washingtonian, I await the results of this review with great excitement. It is my hope that everyone involved with this partnership will work beyond the politics and make this project work for the parents and for the students who reside, and seek a quality education in this world capital city.

Sincerely,

Michael Tapscott

Director, MultiCultural Student Services Center

The George Washington University

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